

# The Pittsylvania Packet

Summer 1993



No. 9

Pittsylvania Historical Society  
Chatham, Virginia

## REPORT BY THE PHS PRESIDENT

Whitnell P. Tunstall (1810-1854), one of Pittsylvania's distinguished native sons, was honored at a special ceremony held in the Pittsylvania Historical Society's 1813 Clerk's office building in Chatham on May 22 with good attendance including 29 of Tunstall's kins people.

A Virginia historical highway marker was dedicated to commemorate the memory of Tunstall, who led the early crusade for railroads in Virginia, and he was the first president of what became the great Norfolk-Southern RR system.

Frances Hurt, PHS vice-president, gave the address for the occasion.

Whitnell Tunstall's great-grandson, Palmer Tunstall of Fairfax, unveiled the large metal plaque (which has been erected on the northbound lane of Route 29 at Tightsqueeze intersection, one mile from Tunstall's birthplace).

The PHS is proud to have participated in sponsoring the dedication ceremony commemorating Whitnell Tunstall for whom Tunstall District, Tunstall High School and Whitnell Elementary School are named in honor.

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The officers who are to serve our Society for the next two years (until June 1995) were elected at the PHS May meeting.

This is to report that all incumbent officers were reelected. I, Preston Moses, was reelected president; Frances Hurt was reelected vice-president; Ivette Saunders as treasurer; Katherine Buck as recording secretary; and Jeannette Brown as membership secretary.

Directors reelected are James "Muck" Doss, Virginia Chapin, Catherine Overbey, Norman Amos, Alice Overbey and Fern Mitchell.

Please note that you are again struck we me as your president and also I am continuing as editor of "The Packet." (I will welcome your suggestions and contributions for "The Packet.")

I am pleased to report that we have installed beautiful colonial type wooden shutters for all windows of the PHS building and have had the building repainted inside and outside, gutters repaired and added backsteps.

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\*\* If you have an asterisk beside your name on the address, it means your membership has expired. This will be your last issue of "The Packet." Please renew now (\$10 per year).

### INTERESTING PROGRAM SET FOR PHS AUG. 16 MEETING

The PHS's next regular meeting will be on Monday night, August 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Jackie Hermigle, survey archeologist of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, will come from Richmond to present a slide program depicting Pittsylvania's prehistoric culture.

It promises to be an interesting and informative program revealing some of the county's historic archeological sites upon which our heritage is based.

Jackie will provide some surprises to assist Pittsylvania citizens in recording their fragile resources.

Don't forget the PHS meeting Monday, August 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the old 1813 clerk's office back of the Chatham Town Hall.



# Fabled Hospitality, Old Southern Style

By Patricia B. Mitchell

Virginia hospitality is legendary. An early traveler, Charles Augustus Murray, stayed at a Virginia plantation "four or five days; and if the wishes of the friendly and excellent host ... had been alone to be consulted I might have remained there as many weeks."

An essential element of hospitality was then, and is now, food. During the early part of the 19th century a northern student visiting the Carter mansion in Tidewater Virginia sat down at the Sherry dining table at 3 p.m. He described the dinner:

"Mrs. Carter ladles soup at one end of the table, while her husband carves a saddle of mutton at the other. Black boys hand around dishes of ham, beef, turkey, duck, eggs and greens, sweet potatoes, and hominy.

"After a round of champagne the upper cloth is removed, and upon the damask beneath plum pudding, tarts, ice cream and brandied peaches are served.

"When you have eaten this, off goes the second table cloth, and then upon the bare mahogany table is set two or three bottles of wine -- Madeira, port, and a sweet wine for the ladies..."

In pre-Civil-War days Frederick Law Olmsted enjoyed the meals he was served at two less grand Virginia homes. At one he dined on "fried fowl, and fried bacon and eggs, and cold ham; there were preserved peaches and preserved quinces and grapes; there was hot wheaten biscuit, and hot short cake and hot corn cake, and hot griddle cakes, soaked in butter; there was coffee, and there was milk, sour or sweet, whichever I preferred to drink."

At the other residence he delighted in relays of hot corn bread "of an excellence quite new to me" and "but one vegetable...sweet potato, roasted in ashes, and this, I thought, was the best sweet potato also that I ever had eaten; but there were four preparations of swine's flesh, besides fried fowl, fried eggs, cold roast turkey, and opossum, cooked, I know not how, but it somehow resembled baked suckling pig. The only beverages on the table were milk and whiskey."

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*To prepare some fabled Virginia recipes, follow these instructions:*

**Martha Jefferson's Old Virginia Cocktail**

Mix one cup of Grape Juice, one cup of water, one half cup of orange juice, one fourth cup of lemon juice, with one cup of cider. Stir and pour over crushed ice. Serves six.

### Fried Chicken, Cream Gravy and Mush

2 young chickens, 1 cup thin cream, flour, salt, 1 scant tablespoon butter.

For the Mush: 1 cup white cornmeal, 1 egg yolk, 3 cups boiling water, 1/2 teaspoon salt.

The mush should be made, but not fried, before frying the chicken. Put the boiling water and 1/2 teaspoon salt on the fire, and while boiling sift in a scant cupful of corn meal, beating all the time to avoid lumping. Cook until the consistency of porridge and set aside to cool. When cool, add the yolk of egg; beat well and set aside until needed.

Disjoint the chickens carefully, seeing that the drumstick is separated from the upper joint. Sprinkle with salt and put in a bowl, under a towel, for at least half an hour. Drain well and dredge each piece in flour. Put lard in a heavy iron skillet, and when very hot put the chicken in, one piece at a time. The hot lard should stand half an inch in the skillet. Lower the heat so that the chicken does not fry too rapidly, and brown slowly on each side. Drain on a piece of brown paper and set aside to keep hot until mush and gravy are ready.

In the same fat in which you have fried the chicken, and in the same frying pan, drop the mush, a spoonful at a time, so that it forms round cakes about 3/4 inch thick and the circumference of a water glass. Fry each cake a golden brown on each side, and arrange in a border on a platter, in the middle of which you have put the chicken.

Still in the same frying pan put a tablespoon of butter, sift in half a tablespoon of flour, when well mixed with butter and remaining grease and bits left from mush, add the thin cream, a little salt, and a little black pepper. Let thicken an instant, and then pour into sauceboat and serve with the fried chicken.

### String Beans with Mustard Dressing

1 lb. string beans, 1/2 cup milk, 2 teaspoons butter, 1 egg yolk, 1 1/2 tablespoons vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard, salt.

String the beans carefully; wash in cold water, and cook in boiling salt water 1 hour. In another saucepan bring the milk to a boil; pour it on the yolk, beaten up with the mustard, and let thicken on the stove for a moment, stirring all the time. Drain the beans; pour over them the milk sauce; add vinegar and salt and let it boil up once or twice. The sauce will be slightly curdled, which is as it should be.

### Virginia Hot Loaf

1 pt. milk, 1 medium-sized potato, 1 heaping tablespoon lard, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 3/4 cake compressed yeast or 2 teaspoons baking yeast, flour.

Boil the potato and when done, mash it through a sieve. Bring the milk to a boil; add mashed potato, lard, sugar and salt, and when the mixture has reached blood heat add the yeast, which has been dissolved in a little of the water in which the potato was boiled. Sift in enough flour to make a soft, but workable dough; knead well, and set in a large bowl covered with a towel, to rise overnight in a warm place. In the morning turn the dough onto a floured board; knead for 2 or 3 minutes; form into a round loaf and put in a well-greased lard bucket. Let rise 2 hours, and bake in moderate oven until a fine golden crust is formed.

This loaf is served hot for breakfast in old-fashioned Virginia homes. It is sliced and buttered for each guest by the host. By following the above directions a hot loaf may be made anywhere, but it is doubtful if hosts who butter their guests' bread are to be found outside Virginia.

To top off a traditional Virginia dinner, or to enjoy as a snack, prepare one of George Washington's favorite foods, gingerbread.

Gingerbread (a Virginia Revolutionary recipe)

1/2 cup butter, 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed, 1 cup black molasses, 1/2 cup warm milk, 3 cups flour, 3 eggs, 1 tablespoon ginger, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, about 1/8 teaspoon mace, 1/2 cup black coffee, 1 level teaspoon baking soda, juice and rind 1 orange.

Cream together the butter and brown sugar, and when very light add molasses, warm milk, spices, and well-beaten eggs. Mix well, and add, alternately, flour and black coffee and juice and grated rind of orange. Dissolve soda in a tablespoon of warm water, and stir it in last of all. Bake in moderate oven in a loaf or in a shallow biscuit-pan.



# Pittsylvania's First Tory Was 'Hell-Raiser'

By Frances Hallam Hurt

The name of the first Tory to surface in Pittsylvania County since the American Revolution has come to light, courtesy of a scholarly descendant, Dr. Bascom Barry Hayes of Huntsville, Texas.

Whereas all of the counties surrounding Pittsylvania have records of their Tories -- fragmented, perhaps, but evidence that they were there -- the records of Pittsylvania bear not a trace. The archives of the Virginia State Library are also mum on the subject of Pittsvliansians who remained loyal to England and the King although they were numerous enough to plan an insurrection. This is on the evidence of Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia.

In a letter to the Virginia delegates in the Continental Congress written Oct. 27, 1780, Jefferson reported, "A very dangerous insurrection in Pittsylvania was prevented a few days ago by being discovered three days before it was to take place. The ringleaders were seized in their beds.

"This dangerous fire is only smothered: When it will break out seems to depend altogether on events. It extends from Montgomery County along our southern boundary to Pittsylvania and Eastward as far as James River. Indeed some suspicions have been raised of its having crept as far as Culpeper (sic)."

This note drags from under wraps a seething war-within-a-war of Patriots against Tories which occurred throughout the colonies. It was cloak-and-dagger, with moles and double agents, including some sympathizers in the Pittsylvania clerk's office.

This was very important as Tory property was confiscated by the Commonwealth.

Extensive research by Dr. Hayes, who is a professor of history at Sam Houston University, blew the cover on his wild card Tory ancestor, Benjamin Lawless Sr. who was imprisoned for treason in July 1781. Other members of the Lawless family took the oath of allegiance to the American movement, but not Benjamin Sr.

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## Callands Festival October 2

Don't forget the Callands Festival (some call it the Callands potpourri) which is scheduled for Saturday, October 2 at Callands (11 miles west of Chatham).

This exciting event is sponsored by the Pittsylvania Historical Society and the Callands Volunteer Fire Department.

James "Mack" Doss, Box 774, Danville, VA 24543 is the PHS chairman in charge and does a great job of directing this annual event (since 1982).

It is held at the site of the original countyseat for Pittsylvania County where the historical landmark clerk's office and the 1767-1777 county courthouse (and jail) are still standing.

The Callands Festival operating from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. will feature arts, crafts, historical exhibits, 18th century skits, music and food concessions. There is plenty of free parking and admission is free.

The historical buildings will be open for free admission.

By 1810 however, all of the Lawless family had cleared out of Pittsylvania. Dr. Hayes speculates that Benjamin's arrest may have stigmatized the other respected members of the family to the point they chose to leave. Of interest, Dr. Hayes notes, is that most settled in Wilkes County, Georgia, a hotbed of Toryism. A mistake in recording a will there inadvertently changed the name to Lovless.

As is often the case with families above reproach, Dr. Hayes seems to take unfeigned delight in his forebears who seem to have been a hell-raising lot a couple of hundred years ago. Apparently the court was their playground, especially Benjamin's. Dr. Hayes notes that he showed a "volatile and unpredictable nature as a young man in Caroline County in 1745" when, as a witness in another man's wit, he misbehaved to the extent of being taken into custody by the sheriff. It seems that shortly afterwards, he departed for Halifax, then to Pittsylvania Counties.

Other Lawlesses emigrated, too, and patented land with Pittsylvania's first families. "Although he (Benjamin) had once owned considerable property," Dr. Hayes writes, "he died almost penniless around 1798. His estate consisted of one mare valued at nine pounds but actually selling in time for 13 pounds 11 shillings."

It may have been that he ceded property to his sons earlier with the balance confiscated by Virginia authorities during the Revolution.

In addition to being in numerous lawsuits with his neighbors, Benjamin was charged several times with assault and battery in the Halifax County court before Pittsylvania was established.

In 1769 he had to pay a one year peace bond for "insulting the Pittsylvania County court." He was fined for drunkenness in 1778 due to charges brought by Camden Parish. A little family unpleasantness sent him to prison that same year for theft, with Benjamin Lawless Jr., one of the witnesses against him. He was found not guilty of stealing three blacks in 1781 but was imprisoned for treason in July of that year.

The charge may well have had its roots in the fact that in 1781 Lord Cornwallis and his Redcoats had advanced to the Dan River no more than 10 miles from Lawless' property chasing General Nathaniel Greene in the legendary Race in the Dan. The race occurred in February 1781 when Cornwallis was recruiting frantically to try to nail the wiley Greene. From what is known about Benjamin, he might have been looking for some fun.

Charges of treason against Benjamin Lawless Sr. were dropped after the War for Independence. If the Tories had had a few more firebrands like Benjamin -- spoiling for a fight -- the "Star Spangled Banner" might well have given way to "God Save The King."

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**STATE CHURCH OF VIRGINIA** until 1786 was the Episcopal Church. All children born in the state were required to be baptized there. Parish registers giving names, date of birth and names of parents are in the VA State Library, Richmond. (Tree Tracers)

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**ILLINOIS HISTORICAL LIBRARY** will look up and copy obituaries for 25 cents each. Send deceased person's name, date of death and county lived in/buried in. Enclose SASE. Mail to Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capital, Springfield, IL 62706. (Tree Tracers)

## LOOKING BACK ... Before 1940

We of the older generation are SURVIVORS!!! Consider the changes that we have witnessed over the years since 1940!

We lived before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and the Pill.

We lived before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens, before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes -- and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together, how quaint can you be?

Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent, and Outer Space was the back of the local theater.

We were before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers, and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy, and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness -- not computers or condominiums; a "chip" meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware, and software wasn't even a word.

In 1940, "made in Japan" meant junk, and the terms "making out" referred to how you did on your school exam. Pizzas, McDonald's and instant coffee were unheard of. Gay mean being happy and merry, and coming out of the closet were the old clothes we wore.

We hit the scene when there were five and 10 stores where you bought things for five and 10 cents. The drug store sold ice cream cones for five cents. For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one; a pity too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon or 10 gallons for a dollar.

We were certainly not before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were surely before the sex change.

We made do with what we had so there is no wonder there is such a generation gap today!

BUT WE SURVIVED!!!!!! What better reason to celebrate today because we are proud we are the older generation!

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**MODERN WOODSMAN OF AMERICA** - If you have an ancestor who was a member, you may secure copies of records and application which will include information about parents and relatives. Write to Modern Woodsmen of America, Mississippi Street at 17th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201. (Southwest Nebraska Gen. Soc.)

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It is suggested putting a sized 10 envelope into a sized 11 envelope as an alternative to a folded SASE. (Those sizes should have been 9" and 10" respectively.) Another way to reduce the thickness of a letter is to individually fold the pages of your letter. If you have four or more pages to mail, try folding them all together, then try folding them separately, and see the difference it makes in the thickness. (Chisolm Trail Texas)

## Something Went Wrong!

# The Railroad that was Founded at Countyseat

*(The following is excerpted from Herman Melton's fascinating forthcoming book titled: PICKS, TRACKS AND BATTEAUX: INDUSTRY IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY, 1750-1950.)*

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The last of the Federal troops had left Military District One which included Pittsylvania County well before 1872. That was the year of the founding of the only railroad company organized in The Town of Chatham that was chartered by the General Assembly. The proposed company listed its corporate home office as being in Pittsylvania Courthouse, VA - now known as Chatham.

Since the town was slowly recovering from the carnage of the Civil War and finally freed from the hated restrictions of the Reconstruction, it was time to flex some muscle. It was known that the northwest quadrant of the county was especially rich in minerals and mines were being proposed.

Tobacco factories were springing up at Chatham, Whitwell and Sutherlin and their numbers were literally exploding in Danville. A score or more saw and grist mills were humming again on a dozen county waterways. Agricultural production was returning to normal as the decade of the 1870s opened.

Virginias roads and turnpikes were too few and too far between to solve the farm to market transportation problems of the post Reconstruction era. The westward movement was underway in earnest and the proposed line promised to provide passenger service for those seeking passage to the Pacific and points in between.

Heretofore, the only means had been long and laborious via covered wagon. These prospects were not lost on some of the more aggressive businessmen of the Town of Chatham who saw an opportunity to cash in on the railroad mania. After all, it was true that if a charter could be obtained, perhaps the Virginia Board of Public Works could be persuaded to underwrite the proposal.

These were powerful and influential men from Pittsylvania County who were backing the proposed line. They reasoned that after a charter was secured, then perhaps the General Assembly could be persuaded to approve the purchase of 2/5ths of the common stock by the Board of Public Works. With that underpinning, a railroad could be built with a minimum local capital investment.

The General Assembly approved the Articles of Incorporation on March 18, 1872. The company's stated purpose was to construct a railroad from Pittsylvania Courthouse to the Henry County Courthouse.

The founding Board of Directors read like a "Who's Who in Pittsylvania County." James M. Whittle, a prominent Chatham lawyer and former Virginia State Senator, was listed as Superintendent. He probably deserved the designation since Whittle probably knew more about railroading than any one in Chatham by virtue of his being a member of the Board of Directors of the robust Richmond and Danville Railroad.

The very first name on the list of the Board of Directors was that of George Gilmer. Both he and Whittle were on the founding Board of Directors of the



Franklin Turnpike in 1837.

Another was William Treadway Sr., a prominent politician who was only recently appointed Circuit Court Judge. He was a good choice for a directorship since he not only had enormous political influence, but he too was a member of the Board of Directors of the R & D. His railroading experience would also be of great benefit to the fledgling company.

Lawyer William Sims, a Yale graduate and law partner of James Whittle, was named to the Board. It matters not to this account, but it is worth noting nevertheless, that a decade hence, to the citizens of Danville, he would be the most hated man in Pittsylvania County.

This dubious distinction came from a civil rights disturbance in Danville on November 2, 1883 in which Sims delivered a "most incendiary and violent speech" (31). Observers at the time charged that the nature of the speech precipitated what came to be known as "The Danville Riots" in which four men died and five were wounded before the Virginia State Guard arrived to maintain order. Obviously, Sims' reputation was intact when he was elected to the Board of the new rail line.

Jesse Hargrave and Richard White were two prominent businessmen who were elected. The name of the prominent David Pannill of the famous "Chalk Level" plantation in northeastern Pittsylvania County rounded out the Board (32). No doubt about it. This was "Blue Ribbon" group of industrialists, if such a body could be recruited in Chatham at the time.

They had counterparts in Henry who were also elected at the same time at Leatherwood Store in that county. It appears that none of them were playing games and genuinely wanted to start a successful railroad.

The capitalization was set at a minimum of \$20,000 and at a maximum of \$500,000.

Construction was to begin within two years and completed in five. Sadly for all, the line was never built. Whether the Board of Public Works failed to approve or whether public support was lacking is not known.

In retrospect, it seems certain that it would have faced serious competition from the Danville and Western RR which served Henry County from Danville a decade later. Moreover, within four years, the Franklin and Pittsylvania RR went into operation from Gretna to Rocky Mount.

All negatives aside, how many county seats in the U.S. had a railroad organized and chartered within its corporate boundaries? Not many, to be sure. What's more, who is to conclude that the founding of the Pittsylvania and Henry Railroad was a bad idea?

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**CIVIL WAR CEMETERY** - To find which national cemetery an ancestor was buried in during the Civil War, write: Director of National Cemetery System (41-A), Veterans Administration, 810 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20410. (Williamson Co. (TX) Gen. Soc.)

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**OLD INSURANCE PAPERS** - Find some old insurance policies or papers? Call the insurance hot line at 1-800-426-8000, and they will tell you what happened to old companies and who owns them today. Then you can see if the company has any information about grandpa. (Williamson Co. (TX) Gen. Soc.)

# New Video Features Melton, Stone and Ancient Banister River Site

*By Henry H. Mitchell*

Thanks to the assistance of the Audio-Visual Department of the Pittsylvania County Public Schools, a new 62 minute video investigates a Pittsylvania site and its prehistoric and early colonial industry. Included on the video are extensive comments by industrial historian Herman Melton, and by the Rev. Samuel Stone of Altavista, who discusses his boyhood memories of the place.

The video is entitled **"HISTORY AND MYSTERY ON THE BANISTER RIVER: A Native American Fish Weir and the Fitzgerald Grist Mill Site at Mt. Airy, Pittsylvania County, Virginia."**

It is available for circulation to the general public at the Pittsylvania County Library in Chatham, and to local teachers through the Audio-Visual Department at the Educational and Cultural Center. Out-of-county readers can obtain the video through an inter-library loan request from their local library to the Pittsylvania County Library.

The video was assembled from footage of two expeditions to a remote site on the Banister River near Mount Airy and of two subsequent interviews with Stone and Melton. The particular site studied here is the location of an ancient Native American fish weir (a v-shaped rock dam built across the river for fishing purposes) as well as the place where a grist mill flourished during the early 1800's.

Stone still owns the land adjacent to the weir on the Banister's north bank where his ancestor Edmund Fitzgerald operated the grist mill. The Fitzgerald grist mill dam is upstream from the weir, which is probably the largest weir remaining in Pittsylvania County.

In the video, Melton surveys milling in early Pittsylvania, especially along the Banister River, where competing interests of navigation, fishing and milling created much political controversy through the early 1800's. Melton and Stone both discuss the early Mt. Airy - Riceville Road, which crossed the river at a bridge on or near the site of the old "Port of Riceville," known to the earliest colonists as an Indian canoe landing.

Of wide significance is a video segment in which Stone recalls early 20th century fish trapping in the old Indian fish weir. No records are known to exist of 17th century weir trapping techniques as practiced by the Piedmont Native American tribes. Therefore, Stone's memories may provide a significant clue as to how these rock dams were used during Pittsylvania's prehistory.

Today only vague hints of the Fitzgerald mill structure remain, but portions of the massive mill race still fill with water during rainy seasons. One unsolved mystery is how water from the river was diverted from a sill (low dam) into the mill race, since today the mill race's upper end seems too high on the riverbank above the sill. A likely explanation suggested by Melton is that the race's entrance was later filled to prevent flood damage to the Mt. Airy - Riceville road and bridge approach.

Viewers of the video will become quite aware of the fact that this site is, because of rough terrain and tangled thickets, not suitable for class field trips or family outings, but the type of situation illustrated here is instructive of

numerous other Pittsylvania locations which are more accessible

For example, an easily seen Native American fish weir is found in the Banister River at Markham, at the point where VA 683 meets the riverbank. This is just a short distance northeast of the Rache, Donelson Jackson birthplace location. Both of these sites were featured in "Whispers of the 1700's in Central Pittsylvania County," an article published in the Fall 1992 issue of "The Packet."

Three Pittsylvania grist mills are open to the public.

• Cedar Forest Mill, located on VA 461 just south of Long Island on the Staunton River mailing address Route 1 Long Island, VA 24569 Contact person: Mr Ned Lunsford, owner Telephone 804-335-5136

• Mt. Airy Roller Mill, located on VA 683 just south of VA 40 at Mt. Airy, mailing address Route 2, Box 392, Gretna, VA 24557 Contact person: Mr W P "Billy" Johnson, owner Telephone 804-335-5576

• Tomahawk Mill, located on VA 649 three miles west of Climax, mailing address Route 3, Box 204, Chatham, VA 24531 Contact person: Mr Walter Cider, owner Telephone 804-432-1063 The Tomahawk Mill is intact, but not operating as a mill; it is now part of the Tomahawk Mill Winery

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From Ancestry's "Concise Genealogical Dictionary" is listed the following "white" occupations: A "white smith" was a maker of utensils in tin, especially dairy utensils; a "white tawler" was a saddler, harness-maker, and a "whitewing" was a street sweeper.

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**RAILROAD** - If your ancestor had a Social Security number of 700-728, he worked for the railroad at one time; probably between 1937-1943. The Railroad Retirement Pension was set up at the same time as Social Security, and railroaders received their own Social Security numerical prefix. The Railroad Retirement Records are available. Write to: Railroad Retirement Board, 844 Rust St., Chicago, IL 60611 (Southwest Nebraska Gen. Soc.)

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#### 10 GOOD SOURCES FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

1. Judicial Court Records
2. Property Records: Deeds, Mortgages, Tax Lists & Plat Books in county clerk's office
3. Probate Records in clerk's office
4. Vital Records: Birth, Marriage, Divorce, Death, etc
5. Church Records and Church Histories
6. Fraternal Records: Masonic, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, etc
7. Alliances: examples Sons of Norway, American Turners, Saint Paulk Society, etc
8. Insurance Records
9. Military Records: Service, Pension, Bounty Bonds, etc
10. Newspapers, especially weekly newspapers

From Muskingum County Genealogical Society, Zanesville, Ohio

## Child Care 1854-1929

# Children Sent West On The Orphan Train

By Phil Perlot  
Texas Historical Commission

*Maurice De LeLau was one of three children, the son of 19th century Flemish immigrants who traveled from Belgium to New York City. In 1908, his parents died, and he was taken in by the Children's Aid Society, an institution for waifs.*

*In 1912 De LeLau and a group of other homeless children boarded a train and were sent West to foster homes in rural communities. His trip ended when he arrived in Weatherford, Texas. He was taken in by a nearby farm family, but he was seen as an outsider and treated as a workhand. In later years, he became a schoolteacher, then a successful businessman.*

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DeLeLau was part of one of the largest mass migrations of homeless children in U.S. history. Between 1854 and 1929, about 150,000 children were sent by rail from Eastern cities to rural families in the West. The trains that carried them became known as "orphan trains," and the relocation was called "placing out."

The Children's Aid Society was founded during the early 1850s in New York City by Charles Loring Brace, a social worker who became a pioneer in placing out children on orphan trains.

Shocked at the multitude of homeless children who were barely surviving on the streets and leading lives of crime, Brace was determined to give them a better opportunity. The best way to do this, he concluded, was to place each child in a family.

He thought that the wholesomeness of farm families and the healthiness of the wide open plains would help the children by sending them west to get a fresh start in life.

Although many of the "placed out" children had good experiences with their new families, many were exploited as free labor.

The usual method of placing the children resembled a cattle auction. After the train deposited them at the local rail station, the orphan children were herded together on the steps of the local courthouse or church, where they were picked over by potential foster parents, who would feel the sturdiness of their limbs. Children were chosen on a trial basis. Adoption was not mandatory, and children often were mistreated and shuffled from home to home. Those who weren't chosen continued on the train to the next town.

Cold as this method of placing children seems today, in the days before child labor laws, when small children worked long hours in factories and in mines alongside their mothers and fathers, placing out by orphan trains seemed a humane alternative.

By the 1920s, however, with changes in child welfare ideas, new laws, compulsory education, and local government funding of foster care, the orphan trains' popularity declined and came to an almost end by 1929.

Children's Aid Society statistics indicate that a majority of orphans had a successful experience. But many others were unhappy. One orphan recalled how

his foster parents never hugged or touched him, never told him they loved him, and never allowed him to call them mom and dad. For a child, there could be no crueler treatment.

Those who rode the orphan trains carried with them a cloudy past and an uncertain future. Today, some survivors are still haunted by the question of their true identity.

The stories of the orphan train riders have touched the hearts of a group of interested persons, who in 1986 began the "Orphan Train Heritage Society of America" (OTHTSA). It is a genealogical research group devoted to finding orphan train riders, putting them in touch with others like themselves and helping them to trace their histories.

Its sixth annual reunion of the OTHTSA is coming up in Fayetteville, Arkansas this October. For more information about the Society, contact Mary Ellen Johnson, 4912 Trout Farm Road, Springdale, AR 72726 - (Leon County Hunters Dispatch, Texas)

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### LAND MEASUREMENT GUIDELINES

All individuals doing research have at one time or another wondered about the system of measurements used by early surveyors.

The basis of measurement was the Gunther chain invented by EDMUND GUNTHER in 1620. The Gunther's chain was 66 feet in length and consisted of a hundred links of 7 92/100 inches each. It was made of number 6 or 9 wire.

The chain played an important role in today's system of measurement. Our rod is 16 1/2 feet or one fourth of a chain. The mile is 80 chains. The acre is 10 square chains or 43,560 square feet. The rod was also known as a pole. Streets were laid out one chain wide.

The old linear measure so often called the surveyor's measure was as follows:

7 92/100 inches makes 1 link, 25 links makes 1 pole, 100 links or 4 poles, makes 1 chain, 10 chains makes 1 furlong, and 8 furlongs or 80 chains makes 1 mile.

Florida Genealogy Society (Tampa)

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### THOMAS FOSTER PHILLIPS DAY WALLACE STATE (MO) PARK, OCT. 16

Thomas Foster Phillips, born in TN, raised seven children near Lathrop, MO in the late 1800s. John W. Phillips, Samuel D. Phillips, Thomas A. Phillips, Anna B. Phillips Demaree, Celia Phillips Shaffner, Kathryn Phillips Mox and Rozella Phillips Bright. He operated the roller mill at Holt, MO in the early 1900s.

If you are a relative of Thomas Foster Phillips (1838-1928) or his siblings - Mary Anne Phillips Dykes, John Phillips, Lydia M. Phillips Dykes, Andrew E. Phillips, Melinda Phillips Wilcox, James B. Aaron Phillips, or Deborah M. Phillips Hays, all born in Greene County, TN - you want to join the informal Phillips family gathering October 16 at Wallace State Park south of Cameron, MO. You'll meet relatives you've never known, renew old acquaintances and visit home, farm and burial sites of your ancestors.

Contact Dale F. Phillips, Chickasha, OK (405-234-6927) or Robert J. Kerr, Liberty, MO (816-781-7582) for more information.



## May Reopen Some Day

# Virginia's Lone Emery Mine Is In Our County

By Herman Melton

World War I had the European continent aflame when German submarines sunk three American ships on March 18, 1917. The loss of American lives set off a wave of indignation across the country that culminated in President Wilson's declaration of war to "keep the world safe for democracy."

Pittsylvania County citizens rallied behind the colors once more as scores of its sons marched off to war. America's entry into the war affected the county's economy in a unique and historically interesting manner unlike any other county in the U.S. except one—Westchester County, N.Y.

This strange turn of events came to pass because Pittsylvania County, Virginia and Westchester County, N.Y. had the two best known deposits of emery available in the nation. Why was this a significant factor? The answer is that prior to WWI much of the emery being consumed in the country was being imported from Turkey. The Turks were allies of Germany and the entry of the U.S. into the war against Germany caused imports of this important mineral to cease.

To understand the importance of emery in a wartime economy, one must realize that emery is an abrasive that is absolutely essential in the machining of tool steel and other hard substances so necessary to the production of most armament.

It was natural that some of Pittsylvania's alert businessmen with names like Yeatts, Craddock, Keatts and Hargrave opened the promising facility early in the war. It was destined to be Virginia's only emery mine ever and one of only two in the entire U.S. by the end of WWI.

The mine was opened on the Keatts farm some two miles west of the Whittier Depot of the Southern Railway ca. 1917. The area is traversed by State Route 649 but the major mining activity lay a mile north on State Route 795 near Pole Branch which borders the present day Cedars Country Club.

In fact, shortly after the country club opened in 1949 an occasional duffer found his golf ball lying at the bottom of one of the small pits in the woods near old No. 7 green. The pits were a part of exploratory activity covering more than a square mile surrounding the central mine.

Three open pits or trenches remain at the mine on the hill with depths ranging from 10 to 20 feet. Many small stones and a few boulders remain. All are as capable of sharpening the dullest pocket knife as is any commercial whetstone.

An analysis of the emery deposit was reported by Geologist W. W. Miller Jr. in 1900. He described it as a "black crystalline mass" of good quality.

Some county natives can remember when the mine was in operation. One of these, Claude Emerson of Chatham, recalls that ore was stockpiled in small quantities (via wagon and team perhaps) along a section of the present Route 649 just east of Cedars Country Club. From there it was loaded onto trucks and hauled to the Southern Railroad Depot at Whittier a mile and a half to the east. The road was unpaved of course, and access to the main pits required a fording of

the Pole Branch of Cherrystone Creek.

Others remember reading about emery as "the county's most valuable mineral" in a school geography textbook prepared locally in 1925. The book is an excellent overview of the county's resources in the 1920s. It mentioned the value of emery as a natural resource of considerable importance, especially to the WWI effort. The authors proudly predicted that the deposit in the county would soon become the most important of the two in the U.S.

During the heyday of the Whitiles emery mine, its entire production was shipped to Niagara Emery Mills in Indiana. For whatever reason, Niagara Emery Mills went out of business on November 1, 1929. The proximity of the date of its demise to the stock market crash of 1929 is significant and its failure coincided with the closing of the Whitiles exploitation.

The deceased Dr. Thomas L. Watson, Geologist with the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, had roots in Pittsylvania County where many relatives lived. He published the Commonwealth's first study of the emery deposit at Whitiles in 1923 near the time of his demise. It was an interesting one.

Emery has taken on a new importance to historians in recent years. They now realize that without emery, which had the capability of machining the surfaces of hardened steel, the development of the steel industry would have been painfully slow, if indeed at all.

Some argue that the invention of the emery wheel should rank in importance alongside the cotton gin, the steam engine and barbed wire.

It is a resource unique to American, and one can only hope and dream that Virginia's lone emery mine at Whitiles will reopen some day.

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## CONFUSING DEFINITIONS FROM COLONIAL TIMES

*Many terms commonly used during colonial times have changed in meaning and when reading old documents, we should know of these changes. Some are*

**ALIAS** Usually meant illegitimacy. The surnames of the father and mother were joined, it did not have a criminal meaning.

**SENIOR OR JUNIOR** These terms did not necessarily refer to father and son. If two men in the town had the same name, the older was "Senior" and the younger "Junior" even if they weren't related.

**NIECE** Niece could refer to any female relative but usually to a granddaughter.

**NEPHEW** A nephew could be an illegitimate son, usually a grandson.

**COUSIN** A cousin might be a nephew or uncle.

**BROTHER** This term could refer to an adopted brother but could also mean an in-law or lodge or Church brother.

**DOMESTIC** A wife could be called a domestic because she was at home.

**GENTLEMAN** A male with an independent income - a pensioner.

**INMATE** Referred to someone who did not own the real estate on which he resided, not one in prison.

**CRAZY** Usually meant a person who was ill or in generally poor health, not necessarily mentally ill.

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## IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

*Individuals, \$10 a year, make check payable to PHS. Mail to Jeannette Brown, Membership Secretary, Route 1, Chatham, VA 24511.*

# August 1993 Queries

(Fees to members to aid others with similar interests.)

Seek information on family of Nathaniel GEAR, born June 8, 1752 in Orange Co., VA, d. Sept. 8, 5, wife Elizabeth. Parents of William GEAR b. 1762 Jonathan b. 1767 Mary b. 1775 Sally b. 1771 Benson b. 1777 Joshua b. 1780 Elizabeth b. 1785 Write Ossie GEAR, 705 Garden Vista Circle, Georgetown, Texas 78628.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seeking VA ancestors: locations, dates, siblings of these two men who with their wives and children were neighbors at Couches Gap, Green Co. TN in 1850: Alexander FARMER and Stephen FARMER. Alexander b. 803 in VA, d. 1859 in TN. Married to Nancy MOYER 1825. They had nine children: William, Nathan, Francis, Elizabeth, James, Hannah, Susan, Alexander and Nancy. Stephen b. 1806 d. 1855 married to Eliza SMITH 831. They had nine children: William, Jasper, Susannah, Mary H. Is. Fanny, James and Ellen. I want to know if Alexander and Stephen were brothers or cousins. Did they have a cousin, Ber FARMER who lived in Clinton, KY. Write to Dale W. FARMER, Box 1, Calaway, NE 68825-0001.

\*\*\*\*\*

Does anyone know the lineage of John Larkin TOLER (TOWLER)? He was born 4-12-1851 d. 11-20-1934. His father was also John, mother's name is unknown. Is he the grandson of Larkus TOLER (TOWLER)? I would like as much information as possible about the family. Write to Karen CHRISTENSEN, 749 Steward Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13207.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seeking information on Alfred and Lucy KEGLEY who lived in Danville, VA in 1920. They had three daughters, one daughter Myrtle Elizabeth KEGLEY, b. 1918 and at the age of 22 married Joseph STRANG 10-19-40 in Bel Air, MD. I need help from anyone who may have known these people or relatives, etc. Would like newspaper articles about them, births, deaths, marriages, etc. Write to Janine J. STRANG, Box 90909, Anchorage, AL 99509.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seek information on Charles NICHOLAS (NICHOLS) and his wife Michal (various spellings) FARTHING, daughter of Richard FARTHING. He served three years in Revolutionary War and married in 1786. I seek any information concerning these families or related families. Write Don R. NICHOLS, 126 13th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.

\*\*\*\*\*

TIFFIN, DRAIN, MURPHY, THORNTON, WALKER. Seek information on Thomas TIFFIN, age 75, lived in Pittsylvania County, VA., served in Revolutionary War (Pension \$ 3844). Son was Peter L. TIFFIN d. 1862 (widow married second Richard GOSNEY), daughters Elizabeth, m. Stephen WALKER 1816, lived in TN. Mary married Reuben THORNTON 1819, lived in TN. Nancy married Hzekiah DRAIN 1820, lived in Putnam County, VA. Lucy married John B. MURPHY 1822 (died in KY). Write Patricia Lee MURPHY, 1611 Wilmington Island Road, Savannah, GA 31410-4519.

\*\*\*\*\*

CALDWELL-TANNER. Need parents and siblings of John CALDWELL who died in 1795 in Halifax County. His sons David and Allen married Elizabeth TANNER and Polly TANNER, respectively, of Putnam County. They both moved to Orange, most of 14 other children moved to Maury County, TN. This John CALDWELL and brother Allen owned land on what part of Dan River in Halifax County? Please write Imogene McCreigh TERRY, 5019 Vicksburg Drive, Tyler, TX 75703.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fitzgerald. Need parents and siblings of "old" John Fitzgerald who died in 1824 in

## (QUERIES -- CONTINUED)

Pittsylvania County. Many of his children moved to Maury County, TN and five sons later moved on to the Republic of Texas. Please write to Imogene McCreight TERRY, 5019 Vicksburg Drive, Tyler, TX 75703.

\*\*\*\*\*

I will exchange information on the following surnames of Pittsylvania County, VA: CORBIN, SCOTT, CRAWFORD, KRAUS-CROSS, TERRY, DAVIS, VADEN, MEIRS-MYERS, KING, PLIPPIN and WRIGHT. Please write Kenneth C. CORBIN, 10315 Lagrange Road, Louisville, KY 40223-1226.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seek information on Elizabeth COLEMAN, b. 12-25-1810 in Pittsylvania County, VA, m. first time to Robert HARPER, m. second time to John I. SINCRETON. I want to know who were her parents? Please write or call T. Richard FERRELL Jr., 2138 Seven Lakes S., West End, NC 27376. Phone 919-673-1289.

\*\*\*\*\*

Seek information on QUALLS (QUARLES) families, especially James QUARLES, b. in VA 1759, m. Elizabeth PHELPHRY 1791 in Henry County, VA. Who were his parents? Who were his brothers and sisters? Was he the father of James B. QUALLS (QUARLES), b. 1806 in Roanoke County, TN? Write to Wilma Qualls BENNETT, Route 5, Box 380, Blanchard, OK 73010.

\*\*\*\*\*

We are interested in learning more about Abednigo BAYES, b. about 1885, and his wife, Tabitha Jennings BAYES, b. Feb. 22, 1790 - daughter of Israel JENNINGS and Mary WATERS. Where and when did they die? What about their children - especially John K. BAYES, b. about 1823. Write Robert R. BAYES, 505 2nd Ave. S.W., Alkoma, IA 50009.

\*\*\*\*\*

Would like to correspond with anyone who had STAMPS, HENSLEE or BUSH in their Pittsylvania County family around 1800s. I will be more specific when we make contact. Write Jane C. SCOTT, 737 Sunset Drive, Hallandale, FL 33009.

\*\*\*\*\*

Searching for parents and siblings of Fontaine WILLIAMS, b. 1783/86 in Virginia, m. Nancy HAMRICK in 1812 in Pittsylvania County, VA, was in Campbell County, VA 1820 and moved to Clinton County, OH by 1830. Write: Arlene WILSON, 2500 Wisconsin St. SW, Cedar Rapids, IOWA 52404.

\*\*\*\*\*

Surnames in which I am much interested are CALDWELL in Halifax County, VA and TANNER and FITZGERALD in Pittsylvania County, VA. All are of the pre-1800 period to ca 1815. Please write to Imogene M. TERRY, 5019 Vicksburg Drive, Tyler, TX 75703.

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"HOW TO HOST A FAMILY REUNION:" A free brochure being offered by MCI Communications Corporation. The 16-page publication provides tips on locating distant relatives, selecting appropriate reunion sites, researching family recipes, and maintaining your family heritage. It also includes a family reunion checklist and tips for staying in touch long after the reunion has taken place. To receive the free brochure, dial 1-800-365-HOST. Request may also be made by sending a self-addressed, 52 cent stamped envelope to MCI "Family Reunions," c/o Kate Fralin, 1200 S. Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202. (Williamson Co. (TX) Gen. Soc.)

# Pension Papers Filed For Revolutionary War Soldier

"Elliott, John. S.8410.

12 July 1833. Pittsylvania Co., VA. John Elliott of said county, aged 85, declares he was drafted in 1776 for six months and stationed at Alexandria near where he resided for three months in a company of militia under Capt. Clark Paine in the regiment of Maj. Broadwater and Col. Griffin, employed the whole time in building barracks.

They then marched out of Alexandria and moved principally up and down the Potomac River until their six months expired. It was expected that Governor Dunmore would endeavor to get into Alexandria. He served as a private.

About 1. Jan. 1779 he was again drafted for eighteen months and ordered to march to the south. He marched from Fairfax Co., VA., in a company of militia under Capt. Lun Washington and Lt. Charles Broadwater in the same regiment commanded by Maj. Broadwater and Col. Griffin.

They went through Dumfries, crossed James and Roanoke Rivers, passed through North Carolina and were stationed at Charleston, S.C., eight or ten months and then marched out in various directions in the state of South Carolina in search of Tories, took some of them and drove many others from their homes. They marched in this way for about two months and then entered North Carolina and marched in various directions, not being long at any one place until they entered Virginia again and marched to Dumfries and were stationed there until their service expired. He was discharged by Capt. Washington in July 1780.

He was born in Fairfax Co., VA., in 1748. His age was recorded in a family Bible that was carried away by some of his father's children. He lived in Fairfax County two years after the war ended, then moved to Pittsylvania County and has lived there ever since.

12 Oct. 1832. Pittsylvania Co., VA. William Elliott of said county declares in 1776 he resided in Fairfax Co., VA. His brother John Elliott lived in the said county and was drafted as a militia soldier and was at Alexandria.

In 1779 he removed to Pittsylvania County and left his brother John Elliott in Fairfax County. He heard John Elliott entered the army again. Soon after the end of the war, John Elliott came to Pittsylvania County and settled in the same neighborhood with him.

John Elliott of Pittsylvania Co., Va., private in the regiment of Col. Gibson in the Virginia line for two years, was placed on the Virginia pension roll at \$80 per annum under the Act of 1832. Certificate 16617 was issued 9 Sept. 1833.

The administrator of John Elliott was paid arrears of pension to 3 March 1840 (the day of his death)."

Virginia Revolutionary Pension Applications. Abstracted & compiled by John Frederick Dorman. Washington, D.C. 1979. Page 44 & 45.

-Contributed by John E. Burrows III, 815 Hartsook Blvd., Roanoke, VA 24014.



## WE RECEIVE LETTERS

"I enjoy reading **The Packet** so very much. It has lots of worthwhile information and little tidbits of interesting facts. I am looking forward to learning more about Pittsylvania County and Virginia by reading **The Packet**." Wilma Qualls Bennett, Route 5, Box 380, Blanchard, OK 73010.

"Pittsylvania Historical Society's **The Packet** is the most interesting historical publication I receive. Really, I read it from cover to cover." Hubert D. Bennett, Richmond, VA.

"Please include my name to your membership list. I am particularly interested in learning more about the Tarrant family who came from Pittsylvania County, VA in the early 1700's." Bette Coachman Hochman, 966 Overbrook Circle, Mariette, GA 30062.

"Thank you for responding to my letter concerning my inquiry I wished to place in **The Packet**. I appreciate your help more than you will ever know." Janine J. Strang, Box 90985, Anchorage, AS 99509.

"Enclosed please find check in the amount of \$10 because I certainly want to continue my membership in the Pittsylvania Historical Society." Kenneth C. Corbin, 10315 Lagrange Road, Louisville, KY 40223-1226.

"I have really enjoyed the past issues of **The Packet**, so I am enclosing check to renew my annual dues in the 1993-94 membership in the Pittsylvania Historical Society." T. Richard Ferrell Jr. 2138 Seven Lake S, West End, NC 27376.

"Here is my check to renew my membership. I'm sorry I live so far away to prevent me from attending the interesting PHS meetings I read about, but I really enjoy reading **The Packet**." Frances E. Parker, 4112 Walnut Grove Avenue, Rosemead, CA 91770-1309.

"Good news. We found them. Thanks for all your help." Tremna Warren Haskins, Route 2, Box 331-A Hiddenite, NC 28636.

"I've heard about **The Packet**. Please send me information about your organization." T.C. Brecht, 4232 Montevallo Road, Birmingham, AL 35213.

Nobody who can read is ever successful at cleaning out their attic.

**"THE PACKET" -- Published by the  
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**Frances Hurt, Vice President      Katherine Buck, Corresponding Secty.  
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## THE PACKET - Box 1206 - Chatham, VA 24531

THE PACKET is the quarterly publication of the Pittsylvania Historical Society for members and those who are interested in the history of their families and the area in which they lived.

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To order, write: *MRS. KATHERINE BUCK, P.O. Box 139, Chatham, VA 24531, Phone: (804) 432-6992.*

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